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State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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OF
EDUCATION

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January 13, 2000

TO: District and County Superintendents of Schools
Superintendents and Directors of Regional Occupational Centers and Programs

Attention: ACE Coordinators
Directors of Testing
Directors of Curriculum
Career-Vocational Education Directors
Career-Vocational Education Department Chairpersons
School-to-Career Coordinators
High School Administrators

FROM: K. Gwen Stephens, Director
Standards and Assessment Division

SUBJECT: **Registration and Informational Materials for
Assessments in Career Education in Spring 2000**

The California Department of Education (CDE) invites your district, center, or program to participate in the third administration of the Assessments in Career Education (ACE) in spring 2000. Each year since this recognition program began, increasing numbers of students have participated. With your continued support and participation, we look forward to extending this opportunity even further.

Program Overview. ACE offers a rewarding opportunity for career-technical students to demonstrate their achievement on one of five standards-based assessments. The assessments to be administered this spring are:

- Agricultural Core
- Computer Science and Information Systems
- Food Service and Hospitality
- Health Care, Level I
- Technology Core

The school testing/counseling office, career-vocational education department chairs, or career-vocational subject matter teachers are encouraged to inform their students about these examinations. More information about ACE can be found in the enclosed *Questions and Answers about Assessments in Career Education 2000*. This information is also posted at www.cde.ca.gov/cilbranch/sca/ace on the Internet.

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The ACE program recognizes students who excel in their career-technical subject areas. Patterned after the Golden State Examination program, ACE focuses on individual achievement, rather than schools or programs. Students who achieve high honors, honors, or recognition on an ACE examination receive an Award of Excellence and have their designations recorded on their high school transcripts. Honor banners for each school showcase these outstanding students, and reports with the students' names are sent to appropriate legislators. In addition, students with high honors or honors designations receive a special insignia on their high school diplomas.

Student Eligibility. A student may take each ACE examination only one time. For this reason, it is important that students take the examination after they have had an opportunity to learn the content covered. Prior to taking an ACE examination, students should complete the coursework that is aligned to all of the standards covered by that examination. For example, students enrolled in a two-year agricultural core program should wait until the end of their second year to take the ACE in Agricultural Core.

Test Content. Content for the ACE examinations are based on Career Preparation Standards developed for specific career paths. These standards are posted at www.cde.ca.gov/challenge/Contents.html on the Internet. A two-page summary of test content for each ACE examination is enclosed as quick reference for teachers and students. This summary is also available on the CDE web site at www.cde.ca.gov/cilbranch/sca/ace.

ACE 2000 Guides for Teachers. These guides, which may be downloaded from the CDE web site, contain valuable information for teachers regarding:

- content coverage
- test format
- sample questions
- examples of student work with commentary
- general scoring guides
- descriptions of achievement levels
- instructional strategies to improve students' written performance on the assessments

By the end of January, unified and high school districts will be sent a set of guides for district use. In the same shipment, districts will also receive two sets of guides for every comprehensive high school in the district. These guides should be distributed immediately after they arrive. To make distribution easier, the guides will be packaged and labeled for each high school. Two sets of guides will be sent separately to each regional occupational center or program (ROCP).

Test Format. All of the spring 2000 examinations consist of multiple-choice questions and questions or tasks that require written responses. Local staff members may choose to administer the examinations in two 45-minute segments or in one 90-minute block.

Test Registration. We encourage district/ROCP offices and schools/programs to work closely together to complete ACE registration materials and provide accurate information for test administration. Test materials based on the information submitted will be sent to district/ROCP offices for distribution to school/program sites. Enclosed are the *District Registration Form* and the *School Participation Roster*. To meet the registration deadline, district/ROCP offices are to complete the enclosed form and roster and return them to Educational Data Systems, Inc. on or before **February 28, 2000**.

Testing Window. This year's testing window extends from May 1 through May 31, 2000. Districts/programs that wish to test before May 1 or after May 31 will need prior approval. The *Request for Alternative Test Dates*, provided for that purpose, must be completed and faxed to Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) at (916)

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228-2665 by February 23, 2000. If you have any questions about the testing window or alternative test dates, please call Monica Abeyta at SCOE at (916) 228-2662.

ACE Brochures. Enclosed are 5 copies of the new ACE brochure that has been prepared to help students, parents, and teachers learn more about the program. Additional copies of the brochure will be shipped along with the Guides for Teachers. Teachers who wish to participate in the ACE program may download the brochure for local reproduction at www.cde.ca.gov/cilbranch/sca/ace on the Internet.

For questions about registration for spring 2000, call Educational Data Systems, Inc. at (800) 532-4424. For questions about operational aspects of the ACE test administration, call SCOE at (916) 228-2670. For general questions about ACE, contact the Standards and Assessment Division at (916) 657-3011 (phone), (916) 657-4964 (fax), or star@cde.ca.gov (e-mail).

Thank you for your support.

KGS:jw

Enclosures
District Registration Form 2000
School Participation Roster
Request for Alternative Test Dates
ACE Brochure
Questions and Answers about Assessments in Career Education 2000
ACE 2000 - Test Content Summaries